

## **STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS COUNTY OF NEWPORT**

The Town Council of the Town of Tiverton, County and State aforesaid held a Joint Workshop with the School Committee and the Budget Committee on Wednesday, the 14th day of January 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tiverton High School Library, 100 North Brayton Road.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councilor President deMedeiros, Vice-President Chabot, Councilor Lambert, Councilor Mello, Councilor Pelletier, Councilor Perry and Councilor Sousa.

Town Administrator Matthew Wojcik and Town Treasurer Denise Saurette were also present.

### **1. Call To Order**

Council President deMedeiros called the Council portion to order with a roll call.

School Committee Chair Sally Black called the meeting to order for School Committee with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and roll call. All were present.

Chair John Souza called the meeting to order for the Budget Committee and called the roll.

B/C - Present – Laura Epke, Nancy Driggs, Deborah Janick, Cecil Leonard, Louise Durfee, Alex Cote, Joseph Bento and Josh Mello.

B/C - Absent – Madeline O'Dell and Donna Cook.

### **Discussion on Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Budget with School Committee and Budget Committee**

Budget Committee (BC) Chair John Souza restated tonight's discussion was a philosophy of the budget, not here to discuss numbers, looking to see where municipal numbers will come in. Council President deMedeiros agreed, found last year the department heads were going to the BC before meeting with the Council to discuss their budget and before getting the Council recommendations. The Council needs to talk to the department heads first. Councilor Sousa suggested setting up a schedule so the BC meetings could follow the Council meetings. President deMedeiros noted last year the Council met on Saturday mornings and went over the budget line by line. BC Chair Souza did not create a schedule yet, have set January 28 for the School Committee (SC). Chairman Souza had discussed with the T/A and Council President about the process. Did not want to diminish any committee, did want to discuss the budget with the person responsible and the T/A. Both the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer present their budgets independently so they can come anytime. The administrator needs to be present at every budget meeting. Ms. Driggs noted under the Charter the BC reviews the budget submitted by the Administrator and the School Department two times, the preliminary budget to be received no later than January 15. Town Clerk Mello clarified once the Council approves the final budget and gives to the T/A it goes to the BC by March 18.

Ms. Durfee suggested the BC get the budget as a whole by March 9 then deliberate and if any department head disagrees with the Council can state their case before the BC. Ms. Durfee gave the SC credit for coming in with their budget early. Ms. Driggs questioned how this makes the standard for the BC; part of the obligation of this committee is to see supporting evidence. Ms. Durfee noted the BC would still be getting the budget book just like before. Ms. Driggs requested clarification; the BC will still discuss and talk to department heads. Councilor Pelletier noted the Council discusses each department and the budget as a whole. Ms. Epke opined the budget was a policy statement of the Council and each of the other two committees. Realistically 60-70% of the budget is fixed, Ms. Epke was looking at where the Town stands, will it be level service, what are the capital plans, need to know the Town priorities. Councilor Pelletier noted the Council's priorities are often adjusted by late expenses or new situations. Ms. Durfee opined was a good idea to know the priorities, sympathetic to those on the Council. Councilor Perry questioned

when the audit was due, Treasurer Saurette explained it was January 1 but the State gave an extension. Ms. Durfee suggested a sub-committee work out a new schedule. The sub-committee would include Mr. Leonard and Ms. Driggs. BC Chair Souza affirmed the BC would get the entire budget in time to have discussions. Mr. Leonard opined, don't need to talk about philosophy, getting way off topic. Councilor Sousa wanted to discuss capital, President deMedeiros reminded tonight's meeting was not to talk about specific numbers.

Councilor Sousa, speaking for himself to the BC wanted to tell them they need to keep enough money in the paving account. The Town is putting money into new equipment to repair the roads, will be looking all over the budget to put more money into that account. BC Chair Souza noted if the Council decided they want to increase the paving fund then that can be presented to the BC. Mr. Leonard questioned if the SC would be ready on January 28. William Rearick, Superintendent of Schools, affirmed and explained the SC budget has a .6% increase for no impact on the tax rate. Will have \$167k covered by State aid. BC Member Cote questioned if a member see something outside of the budget can that be raised? BC Chair Souza affirmed can be discussed and voted on the committee. Ms. Driggs opined the BC mandate was different from that of the Council or SC. BC Chair Souza affirmed, did not see the BC arbitrarily raising or cutting something by the Council or SC without discussing that first. Councilor Pelletier noted the duplication of efforts, can be a better process. Ms. Durfee congratulated the SC on their budget. SC Chair Sally Black explained work very hard with the Principals on the budget, can be blindsided by unexpected expenses like last year's increase in health care. Councilor Sousa questioned if the SC heard anything about the funding formula. Mr. Rearick explained the Department of Education and the Governor have been meeting; general consensus is will not get less than last year. SC Chairwoman Black has gone up to the State to testify on Tiverton's behalf.

Administrator Wojcik did not want to discuss numbers highlighted the three largest departments for personnel and operating budgets had significant savings, everything done to hold personnel has worked. A lot of the discussion will be capital, what does the Town need to do without having to pay interest. T/A Wojcik cut the department heads requests from \$721k to 389k only for essentials like roofs or equipment that is badly broken. Ten accounts have all the activity, not a lot of money there, some can't be changed. Increases are in pension, insurance, have to see how much capital the Town can afford. BC Chair Souza opined can't keep funding capital out of the operating budget; it's the first thing that gets cut. Administrator Wojcik clocked in the budget this afternoon, did have some copies with him. The budget books will be available tomorrow after 1 pm. Ms. Epke requested some time to review the police pension fund performance and the actuarial status.

Being no further discussion both the Budget and School Committees adjourned.

President deMedeiros, relative to the TC, was looking to have a special meeting on Monday but it's a holiday, suggested Wednesday. It's for a very important Executive Session; last Council meeting lasted 4 hours, and should do with a fresh mind. Town Clerk Mello will email the Council with reminders and to waive notice of special meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilor Pelletier motioned, seconded by Councilor Perry to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

**A True Copy.**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Nancy L. Mello, Town Clerk